Secure Government Re-Education Facility--
JUST OUTSIDE RENO, NEVADA
--NO, I DON'T THINK SO. I MEAN, FOR ONE THING, WHO'D WANNA DATE THE FREAKIN' HULK?
PEOPLE WANTED TO DATE TED BUNDY.

BUT AT LEAST HE WAS HUMAN... OR, YOU KNOW, HUMANOID. NO, I'M TELLING YOU...
OKAY, SO MAYBE YOU'D BE SHORT OF CHICKS, BUT JUST THINK ABOUT THE STEAM YOU COULD BLOW OFF...

BOSS TICKS YOU OFF, YOU TOSS HIS HOUSE AT THE SUN. THAT KINDA RAGE AND--
HOLD ON.

WHAT?
WHERE'S MURPHY? WASN'T HE ON SENTRY?
S'POSED TO BE.

HANG ON, I'M GONNA CALL THIS IN.
PATROL TWELVE TO CONTROL. WE'VE GOT AN EMPTY--
HRRRUUKK!

RONNIE!

AHHHH!

QUIET NOW.
...UNNNNHH...

SKKRRAK

AAIEEEE!

TELL YA WHAT, GIRLIE.
KEEP THAT MOUTH SHUT, AND YOU MAY JUST GET OUT OF HERE ALIVE...

Brooklyn, New York
Yesterday
HEY!
OH, HEY SHARON...
WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, YOU SON OF A %#@&?!
WELL, I JUST FINISHED A TWENTY MILE RUN, AND I WAS PLANNING TO WORK ON THE HEAVY BAG FOR A WHILE...
DON'T TRY AND GET CUTE WITH THIS, STEVE ROGERS!
YOU TOLD FURY TO TAKE ME OFF THE TEAM FOR THE KRONAS OP.
DANGER
HIGH VOLTAGE
HE TOLD YOU?
NO. YOU DID...JUST NOW.

LIKE NICK FURY'S GOING TO GIVE YOU UP.
WHY DON'T WE TAKE THIS INSIDE?
JUST TELL ME WHAT YOU'RE THINKING. I'M ONE OF THE BEST FIELD AGENTS THEY'VE GOT.
IDENTITY-- STEVE ROGERS. ACCESS GRANTED.
SURE YOU ARE, BUT YOU'RE TOO CLOSE TO THIS ONE.
OH, AND YOU'RE NOT?
NOT THE WAY YOU ARE.
I WANT JUSTICE FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO DIED IN PHILADELPHIA, AND I WANT ANSWERS...
...YOU'RE LOOKING FOR REVENGE.
OH, YOU ARE SO FULL OF IT!
YOU DON'T THINK I CAN TELL WHEN YOU'RE KEEPING YOUR ANGER BOTTLED UP?
JUST ADMIT THAT YOU DON'T WANT ME ALONG BECAUSE YOU'RE SCARED...
OF WHAT?
THAT I'LL KILL HIM... BUCKY.

THAT'S NOT-- THAT'S NOT TRUE...
AND WE DON'T KNOW THAT'S WHO WE'RE DEALING WITH.
I SAW HIM WITH MY OWN EYES, STEVE. I HEARD HIS VOICE.

YOU DIDN'T KNOW HIM.

DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY TIMES I WATCHED THE NEWSREELS OF YOU AND HIM FROM THE WAR?
I KNOW HIS VOICE.

THAT CAN ALL BE FAKED... BUCKY WOULD NEVER HAVE DONE WHAT THIS WINTER SOLDIER HAS...
DAMN IT. SOMEONE I LOVED DIED IN PHILADEPHIA LAST WEEK...AND I'M GOING TO SEE HIS KILLER BROUGHT IN.
YOU CAN LIVE IN DENIAL FOR AS LONG AS YOU WANT...

...BUT I AM GOING ON THAT MISSION TOMORROW.

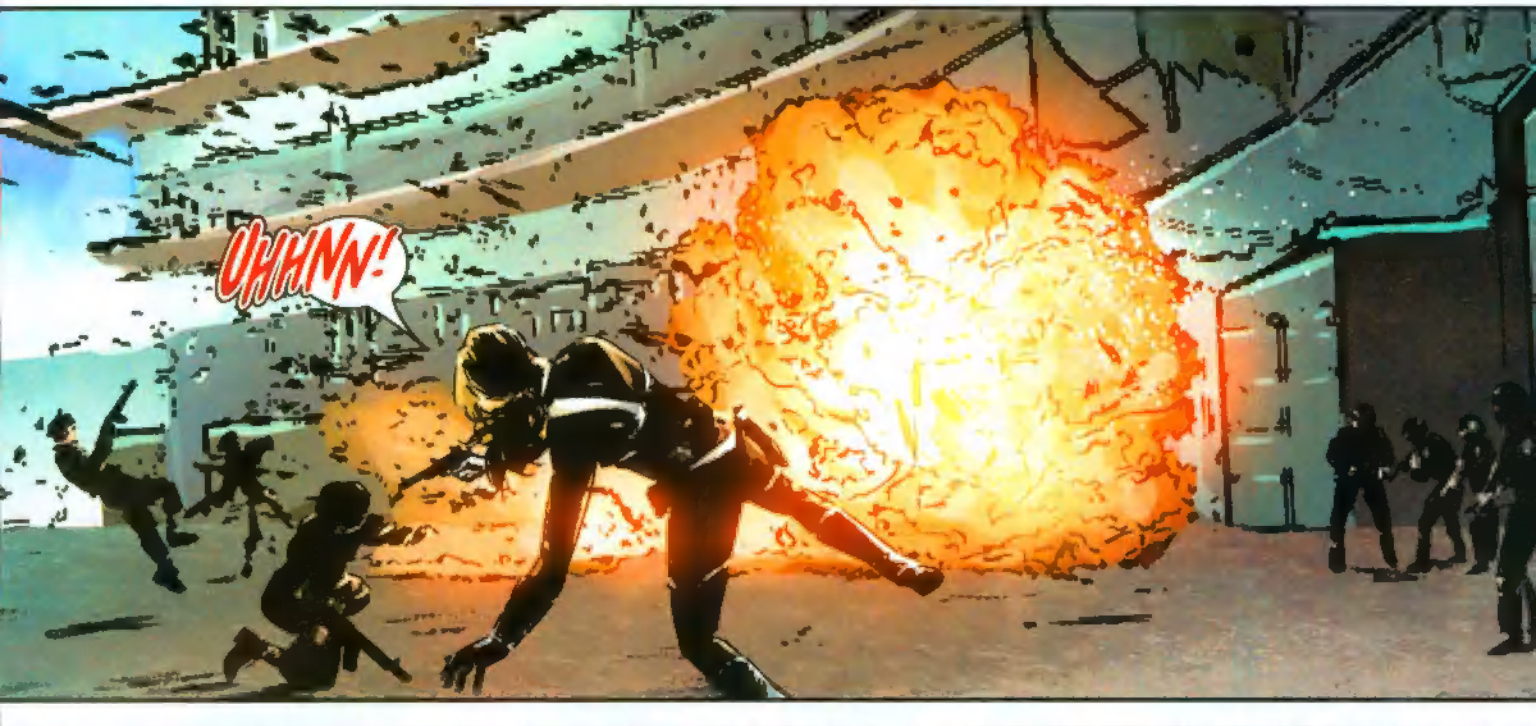
HELL, HIS HANDS ARE SO CLEAN IT'S DISGUSTING...
ACCORDING TO THE EVIDENCE, JACK MONROE IS THE PRIME SUSPECT IN BOTH THE MURDER OF THE RED SKULL AND THE BOMBING IN PHILLY.
Exit
JACK...
ANOTHER THING THIS LUKIN HAS TAKEN FROM ME.
ANYWAY, WE'RE GOING IN REGARDLESS. BUT IT'S GONNA BE TRICKY.
WHEN LUKIN DISAPPEARED OFF THE MAP IN RUSSIA, IT TURNS OUT HIS FIRST MOVE WAS TO PURCHASE LAND FROM CHINA, ALONG THE MONGOLIAN BORDER.
THE LEGALITY OF THIS IS SHAKY, BUT THAT PIECE OF LAND IS THE HEADQUARTERS OF KRONAS INTERNATIONAL. IT'S A CORPORATE-OWNED COUNTRY, BASICALLY.
LIKE HE STARTED HIS OWN LITTLE EMPIRE.
AND WE'RE GOING TO TOPPLE IT?
IN TWO DAYS. OUR INTEL SAYS LUKIN AND THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD ARE HAVIN' A POWWOW ABOUT THEIR NEW MERGER WITH ROXXON. SO THEY'LL ALL BE THERE...
THAT WORKS FOR ME... BUT...
WHAT?
WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT AGENT 13'S INVOLVEMENT--

I TRUST YOU TWO HAVE STOPPED BUTTIN' HEADS OVER THIS MISSION?
BASICALLY.
WE'RE FINE.

RIGHT THEN, LET'S *SUIT UP*, PEOPLE.
OUR TARGET IS IN POSSESSION OF THE COSMIC CUBE, SO SURPRISE IS *VITAL*. ALL WEAPONS SILENCED, ALL CONTACT OVER SECURE CHANNEL.

WE HIT THE GROUND RUNNING IN ONE MINUTE.

TWANG!
THROK!
TEAM TWO, I WANT THOSE OUTER DOORS BLOWN-- NOW. MUTED DISRUPTER CHARGE.


UHHNN!

SMAK

I HAD THAT GUY.
I DON'T DOUBT IT...

I'M STILL MAD AT YOU. THIS DOESN'T CHANGE ANYTHING.
I DON'T DOUBT *THAT*, EITHER.

LET'S HEAR IT, KIRKMAN... GOOD NEWS ONLY THIS TIME.
THAT'S MOSTLY WHAT I'VE GOT, SIR. ALARM WAS NEUTRALIZED BEFORE IT SOUNDED. AND ALL SECURITY PERSONNEL ARE ACCOUNTED FOR.
NO CASUALTIES, BUT A FEW SERIOUS WOUNDED.
DOES LUKIN KNOW WE'RE COMIN' OR NOT?
ACCORDING TO THEIR SYSTEM, THEY'RE IN A SOUNDPROOF BOARDROOM ON THE 41ST FLOOR, AWAY FROM THE FRONT WINDOWS, BUT THEY PROBABLY FELT THAT EXPLOSION.
I'D GIVE OUR ELEMENT OF SURPRISE A CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE OF ONE MORE MINUTE.
--UNDERSTAND ME? WHERE IS LUKIN'S ASSASSIN?
STEVE, LEAVE HIM, HE'S OUT OF IT.
CAP? YOU COMIN'? WE DON'T GOT A LOTTA TIME HERE.
YEAH...I'M COMING.
WE'LL FIND HIM, STEVE...AFTER WE GET LUKIN.
I KNOW.
I JUST WANT ANSWERS.

ROGERS! NO--WAIT--
KRRNNNGH
WELL...
YOU.
YOU!

WHERE IS HE?!

WHERE?!

...I'M SURE I ...DON'T KNOW...WHO YOU MEAN... CAPTAIN...

STAND DOWN, CAPTAIN! RIGHT NOW!
THAT IS A DIRECT ORDER!

AW, HELL...
WHO IS THAT?
CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE VP... AND RIGHT NEXT TO HIM, ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE U.N.
OH

I SAID, NOW, CAPTAIN!

YOU'RE FROM THE WHITE HOUSE?
THAT'S RIGHT...THE KRONAS CORP RECENTLY BOUGHT OUT ROXXON. WE'RE HERE WORKING ON A DEAL FOR A PIPELINE FROM MADRIPOOR.

THIS MAN IS A MASS-MURDERER!
HE'S RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ATTACK IN PHILADELPHIA LAST WEEK!
THIS IS OUTRAGEOUS! HE CAN'T BE SERIOUS?

WHAT IS THIS, FURY? I THOUGHT THE PHILLY BOMBING WAS POINTING TO SOME ROGUE... JACK MARLOW OR SOMEBODY.
MONROE, SIR...AND WE BELIEVE HE WAS JUST A SCAPEGOAT.
DO YOU HAVE SOME EVIDENCE OF MR. LUKIN'S INVOLVEMENT, THEN?
NOT AT THIS TIME.

SO LET ME JUST GET THIS STRAIGHT.
YOU MOUNTED AN ASSAULT ON SOVEREIGN TERRITORY AGAINST AN IMPORTANT FRIEND TO THE U.S. AND THE U.N...ON A HUNCH?

YES SIR.
BUT THERE'S MORE TO IT THAN THAT...

I SHOULD HOPE THERE IS, COLONEL FURY...AND THE SECRETARY-GENERAL WILL WANT TO KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THAT IS WHEN YOU MEET WITH HIM TOMORROW.
OF COURSE, SIR.

ALL RIGHT, PEOPLE, CLEAR OUT.
NO!

WE ARE NOT LEAVING WITHOUT LUKIN, NICK!
YEAH, WE ARE.
ACTUALLY, CAPTAIN... YOU'RE LEAVING AFTER YOU APOLOGIZE TO MR. LUKIN.
WHAT?
STEVE, C'MON... LET IT GO.
WE LOST THIS ONE.
I'M STILL WAITING, CAPTAIN...
THEN YOU CAN WAIT TILL HELL FREEZES OVER...AND TELL YOUR BOSS I'M DISAPPOINTED IN HIM.
THE UNITED STATES, OF COURSE, FORMALLY APOLOGIZES FOR THIS INCIDENT, ALEKSANDER... I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT GOT INTO THEM.
BUT I ASSURE YOU THERE WILL BE CONSEQUENCES.
YES, I SHOULD HOPE SO...

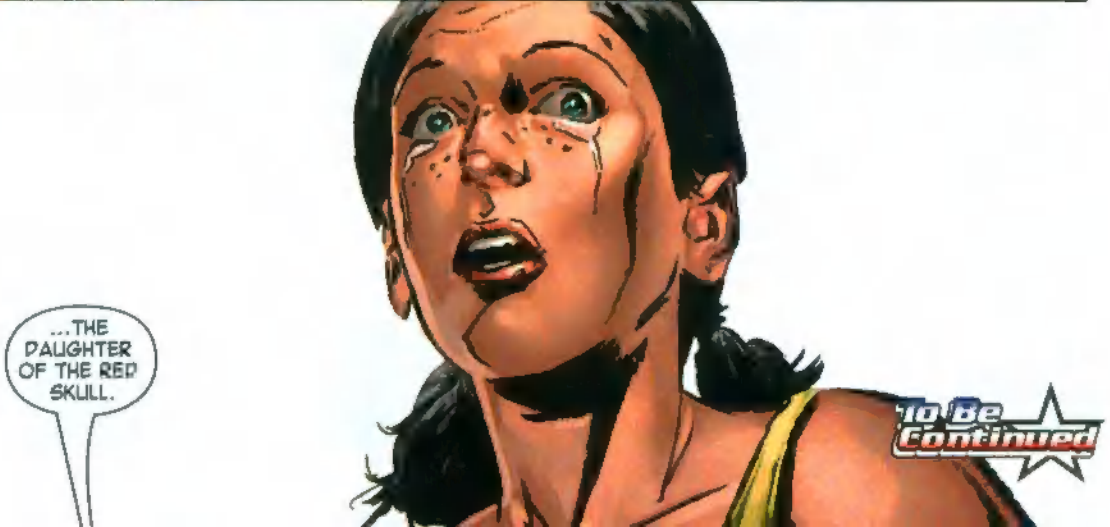
Secure Government Re-Education Facility-- Just outside Reno, Nevada
UK!

YOU... KILLED HIM...
NICE'A YOU TO NOTICE.

OH GOD...ARE YOU GOING TO KILL ME?

DAMN...THESE HEADSHRINKERS REALLY DID A NUMBER ON YOU, DIDN'T THEY?
YOU EVEN KNOW YOUR OWN NAME ANYMORE?

OF COURSE I DO...IT'S ERICA. ERICA HOLSTEIN.
NO, IT AIN'T. YOU'RE SYNTHIA SCHMIDT, GIRL...


...THE DAUGHTER OF THE RED SKULL.
To Be Continued

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Hey everybody, we're back, and I have to say, the letters have really been flooding in the past few months. It's a bit overwhelming, and this is just the tip of the iceberg. And I was hoping to get more letters with questions or complaints to respond to, but sadly the only real "Bucky" complaint letters we got were not that coherent, and while I don't mind copy-editing letters a bit, I can't go to the point of rewriting and interpreting intent. So please, if you want to send us your rant, we'd love to have it here at Freedom of Speech, but make sure it makes sense, okay? And a spell-check wouldn't hurt, either. Okay, on to the letters...

"The Lonesome Death of Jack Monroe" might just have been the saddest tale Marvel has produced in decades. Before this issue, I was still hesitant to pronounce Ed Brubaker the best CAPTAIN AMERICA writer since Steve Englehart. But when a man is capable of producing something this poignant and chilling in a mere interlude story, then he is officially off the charts.

"I never have been my own man...What has Jack Monroe been, if not just a shadow of other men?" What's most devastating about Monroe's death is how appropriate it seems given the twisted character of his life. Illness, insanity, struggle for identity, descent into the underworld...all the themes are familiar.

But this sardonic tribute to Nomad, a character most of us hardly ever thought of, was truly remarkable. I felt like I myself was going mad watching Monroe's condition progress, and tripped my face off reading the Killraven-esque panels of page 16. When we realize Nomad is mauling civilians, and not the enemies he imagines, it is heartbreaking.

Ladd Everitt
Washington, DC

Thanks for the kind words, Ladd, too kind, really. And although issue #7 was not planned ahead of time, I was really pleased with how it worked out, and glad I got to give Jack the send-off I felt he deserved, and one that I thought was true to his history. But then, not everyone agreed, of course...

Well, well. The first issue I buy and already Mr. Brubaker offends me by killing off one of my most beloved characters, while at the same time, taking away the little dignity Jack had left. Jack Monroe did not deserve this, he had already suffered so much in his life, so I ask was this really necessary? I was so happy when Fabian Nicieza brought him back as Scourge in the first THUNDERBOLTS book, and since then I had always hoped he would pop up again somewhere. Now he did, and only to die.

What I don't understand is why he had to die this way? A maniac, dying of a horrible disease while beating up innocent people and trying to bring down an ice cream cartel?!?

I'll still try the next few issues of this book, but I'm really sorry Mr. Brubaker mistreated Jack this way and did not see the potential the Nomad character still had. To be honest, the story was well written and I probably would have liked it, if any other obscure hero would have been the protagonist.

Dieter Nagy
Mannheim, Germany

What I was trying to do with "The Lonesome Death of Jack Monroe" was something you generally don't see in mainstream comics that much, an actual tragedy. For me it worked because so much of Jack Monroe's past was about getting used and being crazy. I knew hardcore Nomad fans might not like it, but it felt true to me, but don't just listen to me, see what Ryan Harvey says...

I've come to really love this new CAPTAIN AMERICA series, but I have to hand it to you folks for the one-shot "Lonesome Death of Jack Monroe" in issue #7. I rarely enjoy seeing important characters die in the comic books; I hate seeing possibilities wasted. But with Jack Monroe, you pulled off something special: a superb tragedy collapsed into one single issue. The last irony of his death and failed heroism stung me in the heart, and the connection to the Bucky legacy that will now unfold in the mag was a terrific touch. And John Paul Leon's artwork had such aching passion and solidity to it that I don't see in comics enough...it fit the tone perfectly. Keep up the good work, Cap is one of the best titles on the stands.

Ryan Harvey
Los Angeles, CA

See, Dieter, it's tragic. Hamlet died, and he's still one of the greatest characters of all time, right?

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: What did you think you'd be when you grow up?

Ed Brubaker: I always thought I'd be a penciler, and maybe an inker, too. I was hoping to draw Spider-Man or Cap. Hmmm...I came so close.

Steve Epting: This is it. Comic Book Artist.

Michael Lark: Grow up?

Frank D'Armata: A lawyer. Now I just need one!

Molly Lazer: The only constant idea I had was that I needed to find some way to pay the bills so that my writing and acting "on the side" wouldn't result in me living in a box.

Aubrey Sitterson: Cool, rich and handsome. Two out of three ain't bad.

Andy Schmidt: Schoolteacher. Tried it, realized I hate kids. So, I switched to comics because it was the one place I knew I'd never have to deal with them again.

Tom Brevoort: Old and dead, in that order.

I have been a loyal Cap reader for about 20 years now and recently that loyalty had been put to the test. I saw the Cap reboot at the local comic store and was in debate over whether or not to buy it. One thing sold me on it: Brubaker. I loved your work on Batman, so I gave you a shot on Cap. Best decision I've made inside a comic shop in a long time!

This run is simply awesome. I anxiously await every issue. I can have action AND intrigue in my Cap stories now? They're NOT wholly depressing? They AREN'T overbearing with liberal or conservative political ideologies? Amazing. Hats off to you, Mr. Brubaker.

The art is stellar by the way. Steve Epting is doing an amazing job. I truly hope that you both can take a cue from the Ultimate Spider-Man crew and keep the high quality and consistency of this book for over 75 issues!

Issue #7 shows us how truly great this run of Captain America is. My bud Delvin has always told me that you know a comic is solid when they can do an issue without the lead character and it's still entertaining. Well, that's what you guys have done. It was a great story!

One thing that often gets overlooked by readers that is really stand-out in this book is the coloring, by the way. It does add quite a bit to the look of this book. Great job!

Capt. Jarrod "J-Bone" Alberich, USAF
Lackland AFB, TX

I certainly agree, our colorist, Frankie D., is about the best in the world, and this book wouldn't be the same without him.

Wow. I'm a huge fan of Jack Monroe and have always felt sorry for the guy--he's never seemed to get a fair go. But CAPTAIN AMERICA #7 has pointed out a lot of things that I, and other Monroe sympathizers, might have never thought of. He HAS always been a fake/an imitator, except when looking after young baby Bucky.

Now he's killing people. What's that you say? Jack Monroe can't be killing people, because he's dead? Hardly. Jack has a history of being thought dead and then resurfacing, usually under someone else's control (everyone remembers the final issue of NOMAD, don't they?).

All of the clues we've heard so far--about the killer being Cap's 'former partner' Bucky, and about the killer having seemingly 'returned from the grave' are so ambiguous as to point to either Bucky Barnes or Jack Monroe.

I suspect that we will find out that Jack was 'killed', then brainwashed/controlled into being the Winter Soldier. The focus on Jack in CAPTAIN AMERICA #7 would also make a lot more sense, and the title 'The Winter Soldier' would have a lot more meaning if it was Jack taking the title in reference to the name of the most important person in his life--baby Bucky, now known as Julia WINTERS. It would be the comic book event of the century if it was the first Bucky, but it would still be amazingly cool to have Jack fill the role. Either way I will be one satisfied reader.

Adrian J. Watts
Melbourne, Australia

Wow. That's some theory, Adrian...Hmmm. Tom, we own any ideas from letters, right? Tom...?

CAPTAIN AMERICA issue #7: another GREAT issue. I thought the psychological mind of the reader was put to the test; I totally loved it. As I was reading, I was trying to figure if Nomad was delusional or not. Am I seeing through his eyes? Page 19, panel 5 finally shows the reality, and I felt sympathy for Jack. He has the heart of a hero: knowing that his time is short on this world he decides to make his last act meaningful. Unfortunately, he's got one setback: a delusional mind.

I love what Ed is doing with the letters page, in fact, I love what Marvel is doing with all letter pages: injecting personality. As a kid (long ago) reading comics I loved reading different thoughts/perspectives on what I was reading. The best thing I read in the letters page in issue #7: "I've got ideas and storyline for at least a few years." Yes! This is the longest I have ever read CAPTAIN AMERICA in my 20+ years of comic reading. My fear: Ed would leave the title after 12 or so issues which is very common nowadays, creators seem to like doing short (very short) stints on books. Straczynski would be the only other writer, I feel, that could keep me reading CAPTAIN AMERICA. Maybe Bendis. Epting was born to draw Captain America, 'nuff said.

Sophea U.
Salem, OR

Bendis? Straczynski? No way. Those guys are hacks. (Kidding, obviously).
And that's it for letters this month, soeya next time
Ed Brubaker

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